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## Some Things Should Never Change

The DCX I is complete. The new technologies and equipment have proven to be as good as we imagined they could be. There was a tough battle on the desert floor at the NTC. The BLUFOR did a really good job against the traditionally tough OPFOR. I watched as M1A2SEP tanks identified and engaged OPFOR vehicles at ranges never heard of, much less thought of, at the NTC. Formations maneuvered with “visualization” of the operational area unprecedented before now. The BLUFOR units, from battalions down to individual platforms, were very successful. But this success cannot be attributed solely to modern technology. If you have read or heard any senior leader in the Army talk about transformation, you know the focal point for the revolution of the future. **It is the soldier who is the centerpiece of the transformation.**

I went to an AAR shortly after a battle and, instead of seeing a lot of soldiers “kicked back” and enjoying the thrill of victory, I saw a staff sergeant checking the maintenance being pulled by his tank crew. I saw a platoon sergeant going around and making corrections on the uniforms that his warriors were wearing — or not wearing, I should say. The company commander moved from platoon to platoon, inspecting items from the SOP. The 1SG was chasing down the LOGPAC, and even the battalion commander came pulling up to “see” his troops. I saw what I knew to be true, that leadership was the real key to success for this unit — lead-

ership which was, no kidding, taking care of the centerpiece of this transformation, the soldiers.

All the great new devices that have made us even more flexible, sustainable, survivable, and lethal cannot hold a candle to **competent leadership**. There have been many articles written about this, but I feel it bears hearing one more time as we search for the right way to bring new technologies into our formations. When I see a unit really clicking, one of the most obvious reasons is because of great **communication** going on at all levels. As our environment changes, communication is the one thing that keeps everyone moving forward towards the same objective in an organized fashion. Soldiers need leaders to tell them the whats, hows, whens, wheres and even the whys. Effective communication builds trust up and down the chain of command and support channels.

At the NTC, and everywhere else I see successful units, the small unit leaders who take the time to **teach, coach, and mentor** create the units that act and operate as a synchronized team. New technical enablers may provide the ability to see first, understand first, and act first, but we, now more than ever, need leaders to share some of the “old ways” because they still work. If fact, some of these new technologies become extremely potent force multipliers when used with tried and proven methods of operation. Leaders need to embrace

new technology while showing soldiers the tricks of the trade.

Our Army is the best, not just because of the awesome power and lethality of the equipment, not just due to the ability to field the equipment across the force, and not even just because of the capability to continue to develop new technologies from our technology laboratories. Our ability to be the best is due to our leadership. The leadership that will protect, serve, and care for the centerpiece, the soldier.

Effective and productive units have leaders who also recognize that soldiers are not on the field of battle all the time. In these units, the soldiers believe their leaders **know the families** and will do what they can to watch out for those families. The soldiers know they have leaders who are willing to get involved and discuss personal issues like finances with them. Great units are the ones where leaders create an environment that is **saturated with dignity and respect** for all soldiers and families.

So, what is the “**SO WHAT**” of all this? The future of this Army is going to be exciting, challenging, and well worth being a part of. The new technologies will provide us exponential gains on and off the battlefield. Our soldiers will be prepared to execute their missions anytime, anywhere because leadership is a paramount ingredient in making them the centerpiece of the future. Leadership is what makes “**TODAY the BEST DAY to be a SOLDIER.**”